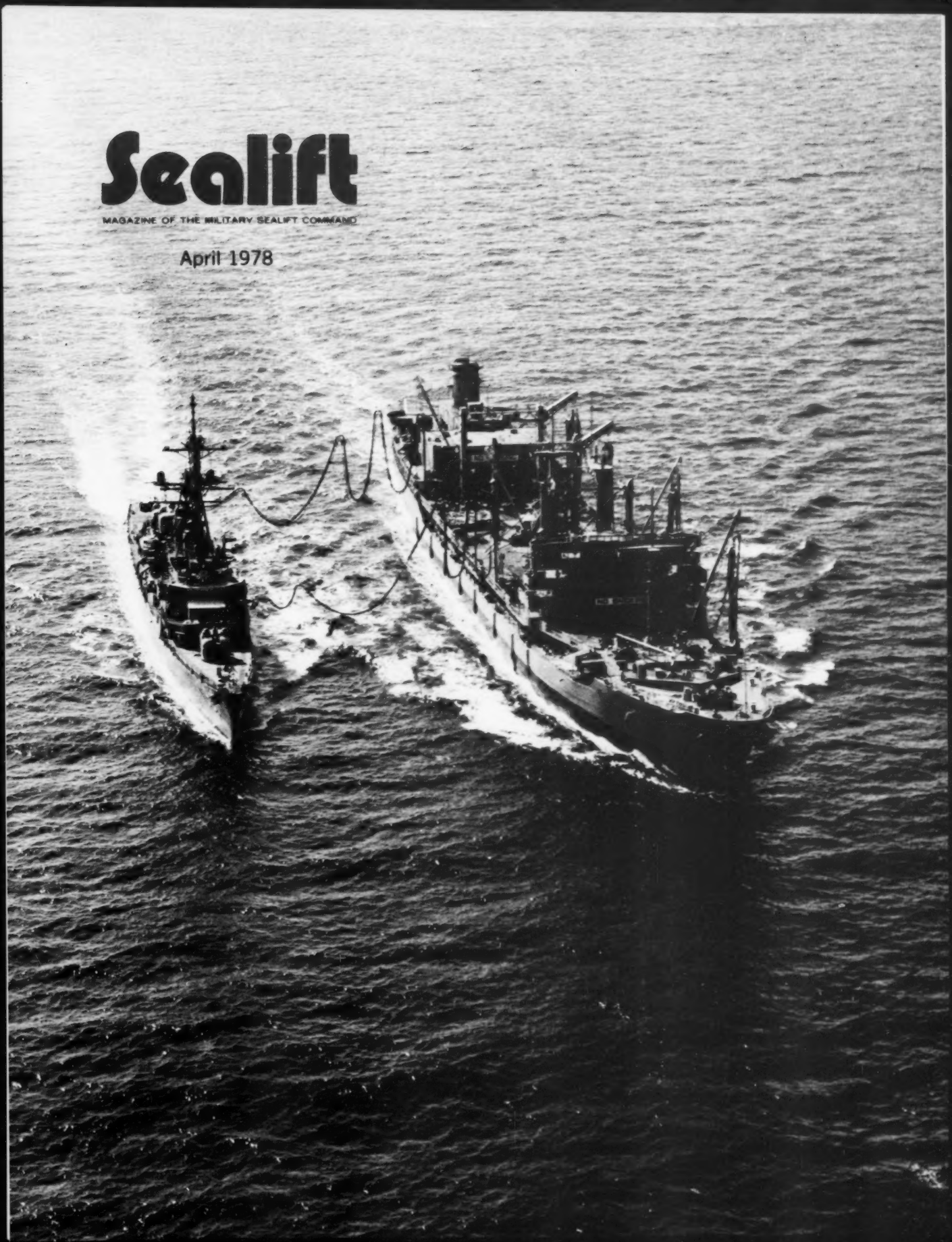
Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

April 1978



MSC An Integral Part Of Navy Team

Armed Forces Day 1978, May 20, is a time when both military and civilian members of the Defense community should recognize the achievements of both the past and present. We should not be satisfied, however, with a pat on the back. There is yet much to be done and as we all know defense of the United States is a tough and endless challenge.

We of the Navy's Military Sealift Command are as much a part of the Defense community as the bluejackets on our fighting ships and the Marines who storm the beaches. We have different jobs to do, but each job, whether it be logistics, transportation or firing a weapon, is an integral part of the whole. Weaken or remove one spoke from a wheel and the entire system is in danger. No Defense spoke can fail to fulfill its mission.

It is sometimes difficult to understand that MSC employees are as much a part of the Navy as those who wear a military uniform. Even some of us in uniform sometimes display an attitude, or misunderstanding, that we are not part of the real Navy.

Over the years, while we in MSC have sometimes claimed that we are not accepted as full-fledged members of the Navy team by the uniformed members of the Navy, we may have inadvertently tended to support that same viewpoint.

For example, we often identify Civil Service mariners as employees of Military Sealift Command while categorizing our fellow command members who wear the Navy uniform as Navy men and women. The truth is that all of us who are a part of the MSC work force are also a part of the Navy.

When we speak of our fleet support ships we frequently identify those vessels as MSC assets. We explain how they have been transferred to us by the Navy for operation. The reality is that they are part of the Navy fleet. We man them for the Navy. We operate as part of the Navy fleet, under Navy control, and the mission we serve is the Navy mission. Our roles are inseparable from the overall mission of the Navy.

If there is any group within MSC who ought to fully and completely understand the integral relationship of uniformed Navy members and Civil Service employees of the Navy, it should be those who work so closely and so effectively together aboard Navy fleet support ships. The teamwork and the spirit I have observed aboard fleet support ships MSC mans is both tremendous and satisfying.

And yet one member of a fleet support ship military department recently explained to a newcomer that the oiler in which he would serve is leased by the Navy from Military Sealift Command.

The tendency to sometimes differentiate between MSC and the Navy has been reinforced over the years by comments from the maritime industry. They too occasionally fail to recognize that MSC is a military organization. Largely and competently staffed by Navy civilian employees, it is nonetheless an operating element of the Navy organization.

Frequently, discussions of the Navy procurement policies that we carry out tend to describe our practices as part of MSC policy. We are policy implementers, not policy makers. We further add credence to those who separate MSC and the Navy when we describe MSC as a military counterpart of the commercial shipping company. There are similarities. However, as the Navy's sealift operating agency, we do more than deliver cargo point to point. MSC manned fleet support ships carry out unique Navy operations. So do our special project ships. Ships that support the space program, cable laying and repair, hydrographic and oceanographic research perform tasks that are not fulfilled by commercial shipping companies.

In today's society, we pay a great deal of attention to our "image." As individuals we try to put our best foot forward, a necessity if we are to attain our personal goals. Our command image is equally important. We should do all that we can to make certain that it accurately reflects what we do, how well we do it, and how we relate to the remainder of the Navy.

One way to do that is to make certain that we realize that we are an important part of the overall Navy team. We should convey that message to all those with whom we have contact—to our fellow Navy members, to the Department of Defense customers we serve, and to members of the maritime industry.

Our role as full fledged members of the Navy team is too important to be misunderstood.

Commander, Military Sealift Command

Photo by PH1 L.L. Sallions

COVER: USNS Mississinewa (right) passed fuel to the destroyer USS Forrest Sherman as the crew developed skills needed to support the Atlantic Fleet. See story on page 8.

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Vol. XXVIII No. 4 Washington, D.C. April 1978

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Petroleum Reserve

MSC chartered tankers are delivering millions of barrels of crude oil for storage in Gulf Coast salt domes.

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USNS Mississinewa

The newest MSC oiler is one of the Navy's most modern replenishment ships. A Neosho class vessel, it began operations in April.

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El Cemeterio Ingles

On the Spanish island of Minorca is a cemetery with links to the U.S. Navy that began 153 years ago.

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Chartered by MSC to carry strategic petroleum reserve oil, the 264,073 deadweight-ton tanker New York is undergoing trials in the Chesapeake Bay.

Salting Oil Away For Future Use

By Louis R. Granger

Transferring oil from one hole in the ground to another may appear to be a waste of time and money. Unfortunately, location of the resources mankind needs to sustain modern technology, including oil, is not always the best. Items that are most critical are often the most difficult to obtain and equally difficult to transport to the point where they are needed. Cost is often great.

In an economic emergency, or a military one, cost plays second fiddle to time. Just as prevention is the first element of safety, availability is the primary requisite of readiness.

That rationale led to the development of the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve program, a program for stockpiling crude oil for domestic use if or when overseas supplies are cut off or curtailed. The oil is stored in unused salt domes along the U.S. Gulf Coast where it will remain until the reserve crude oil needs to be tapped for emergency use.

The program is controlled by the Department of Energy.

Under an interagency agreement, Department of Defense has agreed to procure the crude oil—through the Defense Fuel Supply Center—and to provide transportation for that portion of the carriage not provided by suppliers. Ships required are chartered by Military Sealift Command, the Navy operating agency for Department of Defense sealift.

The ultimate goal is to avert a national oil shortage such as occurred in 1973-74 when foreign suppliers stopped selling oil to the United States. That painful winter cost the country $35 to $45 billion in gross national product and affected 500,000 jobs. It also was an aggravation to motorists who had to wait, sometimes for hours, at gas stations for fuel.

Perhaps the only advantage was to sellers of gas cans and small cars.

Today, the United States is even more vulnerable to an oil embargo. In 1973 the country was importing 35 per cent of its crude oil requirements whereas 48 per cent now is imported.

Shortly after the Arab oil embargo Congress began to take steps to prevent another crisis. In December 1975 Congress passed the Energy Policy and Conservation Act authorizing the Federal Energy Administration, now a part of the Department of Energy, to store up to

one billion barrels of oil.

Originally 500 million barrels was to be stored by the end of 1980, but the Administration's national energy plan doubled that amount and set a goal that it be in the ground by about 1984.

By April 1, MSC chartered tankers had lifted nearly 14.6 million barrels of crude oil and officials estimate another 7.2 million will be on the move by the end of May. Some of this oil may still be in a transshipment terminal in the Bahamas or still being transported by ship.

Approximately 18 million barrels were in the ground and another 3.5 million barrels were in temporary storage above ground. The rest was in transit.

As of April 1, MSC had chartered 16 U.S.-flag tankers and one foreign flag vessel for various time periods. Among the American ships were three very large crude carriers (VLCCs), some of the largest in the U.S.-flag tanker fleet. Included are the Massachusetts and New York, both 264,073 deadweight tons, and the Williamsburgh, 225,090 deadweight tons.

Massachusetts and Williamsburgh were chartered to MSC by Clinton Shipping Co., and the New York was chartered to MSC by Clermont Shipping Co. Both companies are subsidiaries of Seatrain Lines, Inc. of New York City.

Some of the oil moves on ships provided by the oil suppliers.

Under the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, at least half of the crude oil cargo must be transported on U.S.-flag privately owned ships if available at fair and reasonable rates.

To move 50 per cent of the 500 million barrels of oil a fleet of crude tankers chartered by MSC will have to be on the move constantly. The size of that proposed fleet is now being determined by MSC, the Department of Energy's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Office, and Defense Fuel Supply Center with the hope of getting the program up to full speed this summer.

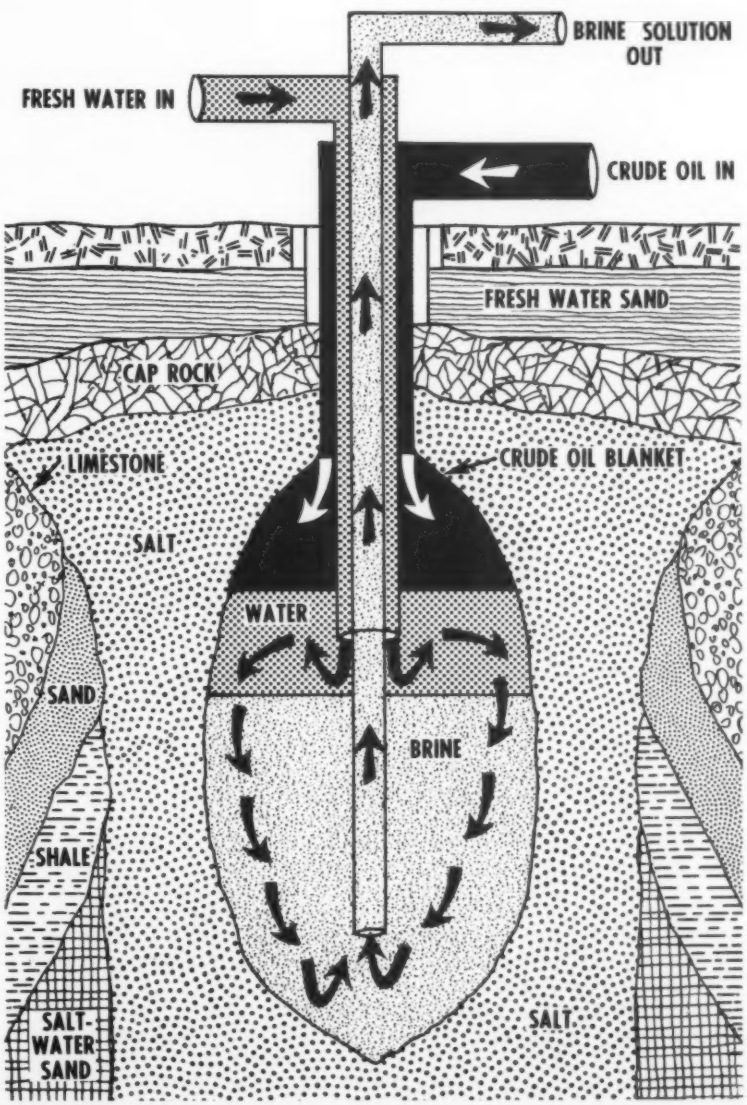
The one foreign flag tanker MSC has chartered is the Finnish-flag Tiiskeri. No American flag tankers were available at the time and the Tiiskeri made one voyage lifting 760,000 barrels of oil from England to the transshipment terminal in the Bahamas.

The first crude oil began to move to the domes last July on board vessels provided by the oil suppliers. In October oil began to move on MSC chartered ships. The first U.S.-flag chartered tanker was the 26,900 deadweight-ton Cantigny, owned by the International Ocean Transport Corp. of New York. Cantigny made two voyages between Puerto Mexico on the Mexican Gulf to Sunshine, La., delivering oil for storage in the Bayou Choctaw salt dome near Baton Rouge.

In the last four months of 1977, MSC-chartered tankers moved a little more than four million barrels for the oil program. For the first five months of 1978, however, tankers either had or are going to move 4.4 times that amount—more than 17.7 million barrels.

There have been five VLCC lifts of North Sea oil from the United Kingdom and three VLCC lifts out of the Mid East for a total of approximately 13.8 million barrels.

Thirteen smaller tankers of the



Williamsburgh master Capt. Sidney Wire (right) and owners representative John Maytum pose on the big ship's deck. Wire commanded Manhattan on its voyage through the Northwest Passage to test the feasibility of using that route.

The VLCC Williamsburgh and Zapata Ranger are berthed at the transshipment terminal while oil is pumped from Williamsburgh to Ranger.

30,000 to 40,000 deadweight-ton range moved about 6.2 million barrels through end of April from closer points of origin in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico to the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Oil transported by the giant tankers has been taken to Freeport on Grand Bahama Island where Burmah Oil Tankers Ltd. operates the South Riding Point Crude Oil Transshipment Terminal. If possible, a smaller tanker is scheduled to meet the VLCC and some oil is transferred across the dock to the smaller ship. The remainder of this oil is stored until other shuttle ships are available to deliver it.

From the Bahamas the shuttle tankers transport the crude to the Gulf Coast to either Freeport and Nederland, Texas, or Sunshine, La. At Freeport, the oil moves through a pipeline to the Bryan Mound salt dome. At Nederland and Sunshine it is transported by barge over the Intercoastal Waterway to two different storage sites in Louisiana.

This system of transshipping the oil is dictated by the shallow water of U.S. Gulf and East Coast ports that requires refiners to rely on relatively small and expensive ships for transportation of foreign crude oil into U.S. ports.

The Bahamas terminal, which became operational in January 1975, has become a significant link in the worldwide transportation of crude oil. Closer to Gulf and East Coast refiners than the Caribbean terminals, it reportedly saves shippers eight to 12 cents a barrel.

The three sites where oil now is being stored soon may be augmented by a salt mine at Weeks Island, Iberia, La. Negotiations are under way for the government purchase of that site. The government also is considering use of storage sites at Lexington, Ky.; St. Mary, La.; Ironton, Ohio; and Grand Saline, Texas.

Hundreds of salt domes are lo-

cated near the shoreline of the U.S. Gulf Coast and more than 90 in North America have been converted for use as storage sites for such products as natural gas, butane, propane and ethylene.

Sun Trading and Marine Transport Co. has stored hydrocarbons in an underground salt cavern near Detroit, Mich. for more than 10 years, and natural gas and petroleum products have been stored in salt caverns in other countries for 20 years.

Only crude oil is proposed for stockpiling under the Strategic Petroleum Reserve program. About 60 per cent will be a high sulfur content oil called sour crude. It is used primarily for heating and other fuel oils. The remainder will be low sulfur oils, or sweet crude, used mostly for refining to gasoline.

The Federal Energy Administration had selected Gulf Coast domes for storage because they are near seaports and the major pipelines that crisscross the United States. This would facilitate using the pipelines or coastal shipping to feed crude oil to refineries in the Gulf and Midwest areas or the Northeastern United States should overseas oil supplies be interrupted.

Storing oil in salt caverns is relatively easy and cheap. The caverns contain saturated brine and as the oil is pumped in an equal volume of the brine is pumped out. The oil is lighter than the brine mixture and floats on the top. To remove the oil, water is pumped back in and the oil is forced up and out.

Cost to store the oil in an existing cavern is about $1.50 a barrel compared to $8 to $12 in unsightly above-ground tank farms. The Department of Energy also has considered and rejected use of obsolete tankers, rubber bags and depleted oil wells for storage.

Eventually, pipelines will connect all the storage sites to the oil receiving ports. Although the pipelines will reduce the cost of getting the oil from the terminals to the storage site, the size of these lines, such as the 42-inch line planned between Nederland and the West Hackberry storage site, is dictated more by the volume of oil to be extracted on a daily basis during an emergency than by the rate at which oil has to be moved from Nederland to West Hackberry for injection into the storage domes.

Total cost of the first 500 million barrels is estimated to be between $7.6 and $8.8 billion and about nine of every 10 dollars is spent for procurement and transportation of the oil. Taking everything into consideration the estimated price of a barrel of reserve oil is about $17.55.

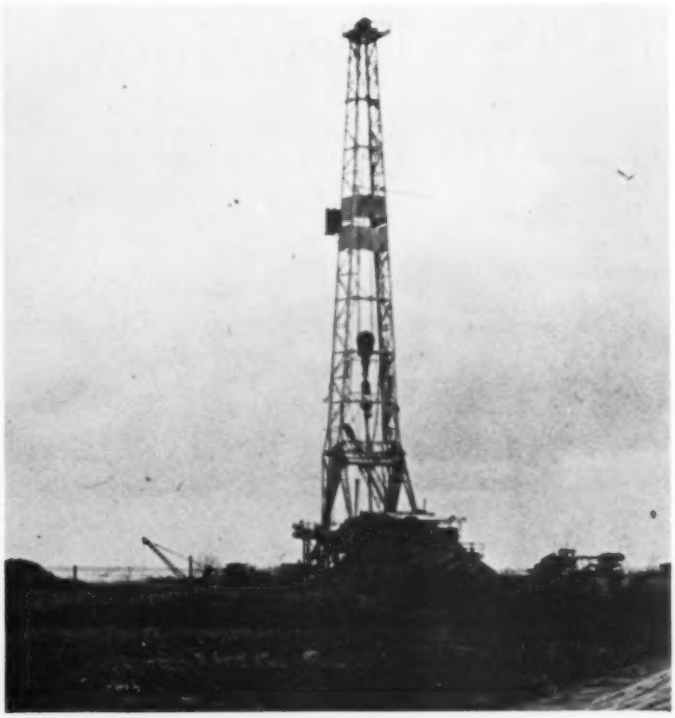
When the first half-billion barrels are in the ground, reserve stocks will permit a withdrawal of about four million barrels a day, when and if the need arises.

"This rate will provide the flexibility to completely replace lost imports in the early 1980s even for severe embargo interruptions," an energy department report said. "As the size of the reserve is increased beyond 500 million barrels, the drawdown capability also may be increased."

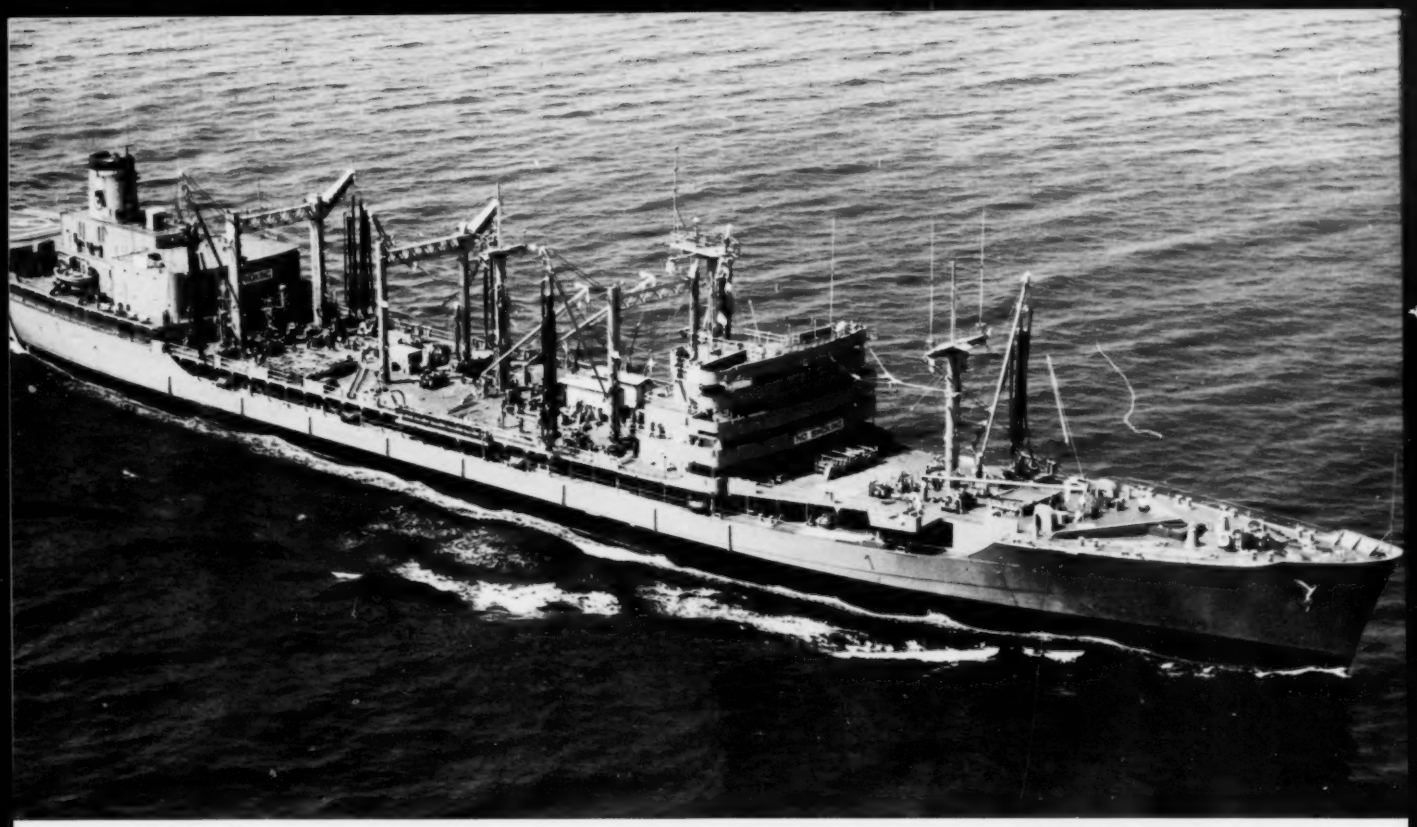
In the event of another embargo or interruption in the nation's imports, a Presidential decision will determine whether and how to use the reserve, based on a "severe energy supply interruption" as defined by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act.

Using four million barrels a day during an energy emergency, the country should have enough oil in reserve for a little more than four months once the 500 million barrels are in storage and nearly nine months if a billion barrels are in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

With the price of oil expected to continue to rise, buying oil now and storing it for an emergency might be compared to setting up an energy savings account that pays a high rate of interest. ⚓



A derrick drills additional openings for use in extracting oil from a salt dome.



USNS Mississinewa, one of the Navy's most modern replenishment ships, is the eighth oiler to be assigned to MSC.

USNS Mississinewa, Big and Versatile

The Civil Service crew of Military Sealift Command's newest oiler, USNS Mississinewa, rolled up their collective shirt sleeves and began operations in support of the Atlantic Fleet in early April.

The eighth Navy oiler to be assigned to MSC for manning and operation, Mississinewa was transferred to the command Nov. 15, 1976. A Neosho class oiler, it is one of the Navy's most modern replenishment ships.

USNS Neosho, a sister ship, will be transferred to MSC May 25 in a ceremony to be held at MSC, Atlantic headquarters in Bayonne, N.J. Four other Neosho class ships will follow. They are the Hassayampa, Truckee, Kawishiwi and Pontchatoula. All are named after American rivers.

The Mississinewa crew, headed by Capt. Walter H. Barckmann, underwent refresher training in Guantanamo Bay in February and early March.

They conducted a series of trial underway replenishments with U.S. Naval ships. Although no product was actually transferred, the Mississinewa crew practiced fuel hose hookups and transferred dummy cargo pallets. Equipped with new 600-cubic-foot containers, Mississinewa can deliver frozen and chilled foodstuff as well as fuel.

One piece of "cargo" handled with kid gloves was Louis Tippett, a fleet support project analyst at MSC headquarters. Tippett sailed aboard Mississinewa for three days to observe training and was highlined from Mississinewa to Sylvania.

The ship-to-ship delivery of Tippett was as successful as other Mississinewa tests. He arrived on the Sylvania as dry as he departed the Mississinewa. Though he claims he had the utmost confidence in the crew, Tippett admits he would prefer to board ship in a more routine manner.

Tippett was impressed by both the ship and the crew. "Captain Barckmann had the ship in top shape. Morale was high and each crew member was intent on not only getting his job done, but getting it done right. I fully expect Mississinewa to

earn a reputation already enjoyed by other MSC manned oilers, one of doing an efficient and safe job of supporting the fleet."

Captain Barckmann shares that goal. No stranger to fleet support operations, he was at the helm of the MSC oiler USNS Marias when it underwent similar training in preparation for fleet operations in October 1973. A retired naval officer, Barckmann has the advantage of having viewed fleet support as both a Navy officer and a civilian ship master.

Mississinewa is manned by a 105 man Civil Service crew and carries a 16-man military detachment. Headed by Lt. Tom Whitte, the military detachment handles communications and fleet liaison duties. As a Navy manned ship, Mississinewa carried a crew of 360—30 officers and 330 enlisted men.

Neosho class oilers are the largest ever constructed specifically for the Navy. They are 655 feet long, 86 feet wide and have a draft of 35 feet. Fuel capacity is approximately 180,000 barrels. A Neosho class oiler can make 20 knots.

With fleet support a rapidly expanding MSC role, Mississinewa and her sister ships can expect a sustained workout after transfer to the command.

In a three-month period ending March 31, six MSC manned oilers completed 304 underway replenishments with combatant fleet vessels. A seventh oiler, USNS Marias, was in overhaul during that period. USNS Mispillion performed 34 underway replenishments; Taluga, 67; Waccamaw, 50; Navasota, 47; Pawcatuck, 41 and Passumpsic, 39. Mississinewa has completed one, just a start. ⚓

Teamwork by the military and civilian crew is a necessity in an underway replenishment.

Tippett claims his highline ride was an adventure, but would prefer to board a ship some other way.

Sailors' Grave Sites Reveal Navy History

By Linda M. Quinones

On the Spanish island of Minorca in the Mediterranean lies a small cemetery surrounded by a crumbling stone wall. Known to local fishermen as El Cemeterio Ingles—the English cemetery—its history is closely linked to that of the U.S. Navy.

At the turn of the 19th century, the capital of Minorca, Mahon, was an international port frequented by French, Dutch, British and American warships. A large protected port, Mahon faces Toulon and dominates the Western Mediterranean.

It was here that the U.S. Navy's Mediterranean Squadron was based for 25 years and where young midshipmen were trained before the Naval Academy was established in 1845 at Annapolis, Md.

Of the 37 graves known to exist inside the cemetery wall, 12 are those of American seamen. Three others are believed to be although the inscriptions on the grave markers are no longer legible.

Crews of both American and British ships have maintained the 153-year old cemetery since the 1950s. Previously it endured long periods of neglect.

In December, USNS Waccamaw master Capt. Ernest McCann and crewmen of the fleet support oiler cleared debris from the cemetery and its seaward approaches during a four-day port stay. They also whitewashed markers and stones along walkways.

Captain McCann said he and other members of the work party experienced a sense of "well being" after completing the task and plan to check the cemetery during their next visit to Mahon.

The graveyard signifies an era when Mahon bustled with activity and welcomed warships of all nations. A rather dry and unfruitful island, its population depended upon revenue the ship visits generated.

Large enough to accommodate an entire fleet, Mahon has been occupied by the French twice and the English three times. The island's customs and language have been influenced by foreign visitors.

The U.S. Navy's Mediterranean Squadron was based in Mahon from 1817 until 1842 and some of the Navy's most distinguished figures served there.

Capt. Edward Preble, the Mediterranean Squadron's first commander, planned the burning of the U.S. frigate Philadelphia in Tripoli Harbor in 1804 after the ship fell into Tripolitan hands.

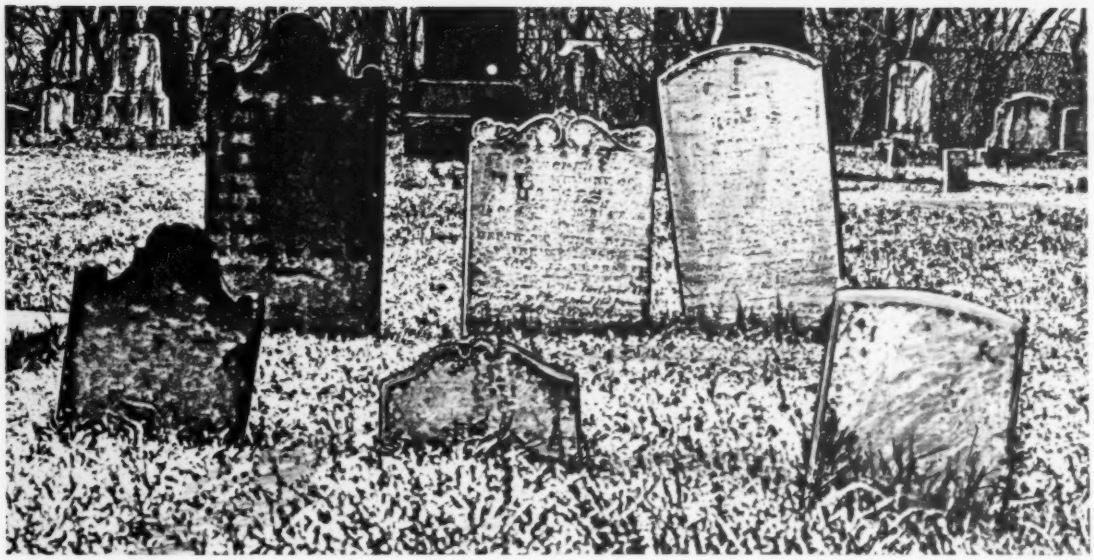
William Bainbridge, captain of Philadelphia, though held prisoner in Tripoli, sent information that made the action possible. He commanded the squadron based in Mahon in 1804.

Charles Stuart, who served on the Constitution in 1814 and defeated Sir Thomas Picton, was the commander in Mahon from 1816 until 1820 and Thomas MacDonough, another Tripoli veteran, had the command in 1824.

David Glasgow Farragut served as a midshipman in Mahon and his father, Jorge Farragut, was born in Cuidadela, the former capital of the west of the island. From 1815 until 1820, David Farragut served on the Independence, then based at Minorca.

British, Spanish, German and American naval officers and seamen are buried in the cemetery.

The graves of two American



naval officers who met death in Mahon are marked with sentimental inscriptions.

The gravestone of James M. Lee, a Delaware crewman, carries this verse:

> *Go home dear shipmate, shed no tears*
> *For here you must be until Christ appears,*
> *When death does call we must obey.*
> *E'vn in your bloom you were called away.*

Another, marking the grave of American seaman William Gillis, also of the Delaware, reads:

> *Far away from your friends and dear home,*
> *You sleep on a cold earthen pillow,*
> *With sorrow we leave you alone,*
> *And sigh our farewell o'er the billow.*

Also interred in the cemetery is Lt. Karl von Bunsen, captain of S.M.S. Kaiser, and last to be buried there—in 1890. The Kaiser, a personal friend of von Bunsen's, called at Mahon in 1904 and had an elaborate black marble tomb erected. Surrounded by a high wrought iron enclosure, it is the most ornate marking in the cemetery.

Title deeds for the cemetery have never been discovered and are believed to have been destroyed with local archives during the Spanish Civil War. On and off for many years, however, the British claimed responsibility for the cemetery.

Throughout the 19th century the cemetery's maintenance was attended to by successive British vice-consuls. One, Archibald Reeny, was buried there in 1862.

On May 22, 1900 the cemetery was returned to Spain. Although the Spanish military were responsible for its upkeep, visits could be arranged through the British vice-consuls. Soon afterwards, the military authorities ceded the land to Mahon Municipal Corp. and the graveyard gradually slipped into a state of disrepair.

In 1960, $1,300 was allocated to pay local labor to cut back the undergrowth, repair and whitewash walls, lay walks and improve the graveyard.

The destroyers USS Forrest Sherman and USS Charles H. Roan came into Port Mahon not long afterwards and volunteer work parties pieced together crumbled gravestones in an effort to identify those buried there.

Once forgotten, the cemetery in Mahon now is properly and fittingly maintained. It remains a symbol of the brave and daring who fought far from their homes in the service of their country's navies. ⚓

Photos by Louis Panarale

Former MSC Master, Nurse Sailing a New Course

By Louis Panarale

Violante and his wife now live in Florida, still close to the sea.

As a boy, George Violante would sit along the Hudson River on the lower west side of Manhattan and watch ships from every part of the world steam in and out of Upper New York Bay.

"I think I made up my mind then that some day I would go to sea. I'm sure glad I did because it was rough growing up in my neighborhood and I needed to have a dream."

Violante was born in the Hell's Kitchen section of Manhattan, populated mainly by poor Irish and Italian families. "I could have ended up as a gangster or on the slab in some morgue but I had parents who cared about me, and I wanted to make something of my life."

In February Capt. George Violante, 56, retired from Military Sealift Command after more than 35 years federal service which began with the U.S. Army Transport Servive in 1942.

His first assignment with MSC was in July 1950 as second officer of the supply ship Robinson. That

While Violante was master of USNS McGraw, he and his crew rescued six Philippine seamen who had fled their sinking ship.

qualifies him as an MSC plank owner, meaning that he joined the command near its inception.

In later years, Violante commanded the MSC vessels USNS Greenville Victory, McGraw, Lynch, Dutton, Wilkes, Bartlett and Mirfak.

Violante now lives at Marco Island, Fla., with his wife, then Elizabeth McKay. She also is a former MSC employee.

In April 1974 she reported for duty as a nurse aboard the USNS Vanguard and remained on the space tracking ship for seven months. She did not meet Violante until her next assignment, the oceanographic ship USNS Wilkes.

She came to MSC with good credentials. She had taken her nurse's training at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and had specialized in intensive care.

Elizabeth was a member of the Association of Operating Room Nurses and the Committee of Concerned Nurses of Long Island.

Retirement has not made her feel that she is no longer a nurse. "I don't think any nurse ever really retires," she said. "We are like firemen. We hear the bell and off we go."

Violante was master of the Wilkes when Elizabeth came on board. He was later transferred to the oceanographic ship USNS Bartlett and Elizabeth went to the tracking ship USNS Redstone. But romance had already blossomed.

Two more years passed before they found an opportune time to get married. In the meantime they kept in touch by telephone, letters and occasional visits.

On Jan. 10, 1977, Capt. Violante and Mrs. McKay were married in Naples, Fla. At the time Violante had about a year to go before his retirement.

Violante said he decided long ago not to get married again until he was ready to retire. He was married previously, but said the long separations from his wife caused problems.

"During my 35 years as a mariner, 28 years were spent at sea. That is a lot of time to be away from a family and loved ones," he said.

Violante said that while he has no regrets for having chosen the life of a seaman, he is enjoying his retirement to the fullest, "It's like being reborn," he claims.

"While I was at sea I never realized how much there was to do ashore. I enjoy taking walks and I have just taken up golf," Violante said. He also plans to join the local boating club on the island. As an experienced seaman, he feels he could help amateur boaters on navigation and safety.

Violante admits that while enjoying the life of a landlubber, he retains certain habits formed during all those years at sea. He still pays special attention to weather reports. "But there's a big difference now. If I get a hurricane warning, I can get in my car and drive out of danger. At sea it was a different matter."

The former MSC master explained that when he got a hurricane warning aboard ship the only thing he could often do was to pre-

pare to ride it out. He did not always have the luxury of sailing out of the path of bad weather.

"The way a master handles such a situation could mean the difference of whether or not the ship makes it through the ordeal," he said.

During his career with MSC, Violante was commended several times for rescues at sea. In February 1974, while in command of the McGraw, Violante and his crew rescued six Philippine seamen who had abandoned their capsized cargo vessel in the South China Sea.

They had been in the water for 10 hours, keeping afloat with life jackets, life rings or floating timber which fortunately was the cargo the vessel had been carrying.

The McGraw was on the way to Vietnam early one morning when two MSC crewmen spotted a man in the water. Within two minutes Violante was out of his cabin and on the bridge to direct the rescue.

The sea was rough although the weather was clear. Winds were about 30 knots and seas running about eight feet high with swells climbing to 15 feet.

"The seas were much too rough to use lifeboats," Violante recalled. "Instead I decided to maneuver the ship alongside the man in the water."

Violante said that because of the swells, they lost sight of the man for about 20 minutes and it appeared that he had drowned. "Then we found him again and I maneuvered the McGraw upwind of him. I stopped the engines and allowed the ship to drift toward the survivor."

No sooner was the survivor safely aboard and on his way to the ship's hospital when three more men were sighted in the water. In about three and a half hours the McGraw crew rescued six men.

Early in his career with the Army Transport Service and with MSC, Violante worked aboard troop transports. Beginning as a third mate, then advancing to first officer and eventually master, Violante served in World War II, the Korean conflict and in the war in Southeast Asia.

Among his assignments as a young seaman with the Army was duty on the Lawrence Victory which brought back bodies of thousands of U.S. servicemen who died in Europe. Congress had passed a bill in 1949 to return the bodies for burial in the United States.

"While I was second mate aboard the Lawrence Victory we brought back around 8,000 bodies," Violante said. "It was a morbid experience. I helped get them to Europe when they were alive and then I brought back their bodies. It made me realize what a terrible thing a war is."

Violante said that war always has tragic overtones. During the Korean conflict he was an officer aboard a transport ship that returned Turkish and Greek troops to Europe. The situation was always touchy when Turks and Greeks were on the same ship, Violante recalled.

In one incident a Turkish soldier hit a Greek in the face with a stanchion, causing the Greek to nearly lose an eye. The Turkish officer in command summarily found his soldier guilty of the assault and was about to have him shot on the spot.

The Turkish officer was told by American officers aboard the troop carrier that an execution would not be tolerated aboard the ship—and prevented the shipboard execution.

Violante explained, however, that incidents like that are few. He said that for the most part life at sea is a solitary one. "In a way, it's like being a hermit. You can't really go anywhere. But your eyes can span across the horizons. There you are, floating on the ocean and not able to leave the ship. I think it is a place where you can get closer to God, or closer to whatever you believe in."

Violante feels a young seaman must decide early whether or not he wants that kind of life, and for how long. "He can't spend his life going to sea feeling that he must somehow learn to like it. Either the sea is for him or it isn't.

"Those who don't like the life will soon know it. They won't last. Whenever I saw a young man who did not have the desire, I would advise him to get a job ashore.

"A real seaman loves to go ashore. But when it comes time to return to his ship, he has to have a good feeling when he sees that gangplank going up."

Violante said he looks upon his years with MSC as happy ones. "I worked hard. Now I have a good retirement after working for the government all those years. I wouldn't trade those years at sea for anything. But I love being ashore."

No one can doubt that the Violantes love their new life as landlubbers. But, it is not by chance that they chose a place where they wake up each morning to the familiar sounds of the ocean. ⚓

Kings Point Women Enjoy Antarctic Run with MSC

By Martin P. Skrocki

A famous mountaineer, asked why he chose to scale a craggy Alpine peak, responded, "Because it's there." Similar rationale prompted two female midshipmen from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy to volunteer for a trip to Antarctica in Operation Deep Freeze, a project Military Sealift Command supports.

"How many people in their lifetime ever get to Antarctica?" asked Midshipman Cristina Zarate, 21, who, with her Kings Point roommate Midshipman Ferne Doyle, 20, returned recently from a two-month voyage to the bottom of the world aboard the USNS Maumee. They were the first women to make an Antarctic trip aboard the Maumee.

Operation Deep Freeze is the joint support effort for the U.S. Antarctic Program sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Support units involved in Deep Freeze include the Naval Support Force, Antarctica; Antarctic Development Squadron Six; Coast Guard icebreakers, and Military Sealift Command tanker Maumee and dry cargo ship USNS Bland.

Maumee and Bland deliver cargo to McMurdo Station to supply the scientific community and the Navy support base there.

Zarate's and Doyle's mission to Antarctica was part of the academy's shipboard training program. Each midshipman must complete a year of sea time aboard various U.S.-flag merchant vessels as a work-study assignment.

While the majority of midshipmen from Kings Point make runs on established trade routes to Europe, South America and the Orient, MSC has accepted these

Ferne Doyle

Cristina Zarate

young men and women for Operation Deep Freeze during the past few years.

Last December the two women arrived at Aruba, an island in the Caribbean, to board the Maumee, a 620-foot tanker with a seven million gallon capacity. The vessel is operated for MSC by Hudson Waterways Corp. and is a veteran of many Antarctic voyages.

Zarate and Doyle are juniors at Kings Point who volunteered for the polar trip. Because of their good academic records they were allowed to miss a few weeks of classes to sail with the Maumee.

"When I asked to be sent to the Antarctic during sea year," said Doyle, "I just thought it would be an interesting place to see. About halfway there, though, I began to realize what an important mission Deep Freeze is. We were carrying a cargo of aviation and Arctic diesel fuel, and we could only deliver it during that week when McMurdo Sound was free of ice. We just had to get through. Everyone at McMurdo depended on us."

Neither woman is a stereotyped rugged Antarctica voyager. Doyle is from Mokena, Ill., the only daughter of a railroad employee. She was nominated to Kings Point by U.S. Congressman George M. O'Brien of her home district.

At the academy, she has been a member of the regimental marching band and has worked on the yearbook staff. She traveled very little before enrolling at the academy, and said she found her sea voyages great adventures.

Zarate, on the other hand, is a self-proclaimed wanderer. "I love to travel," she says. "There's a bit of gypsy in my soul." A native of San Jose, Calif., Zarate was appointed to Kings Point by Senators Alan Cranston and John Tunney.

She enjoys outdoor activities and is a member of the cross country, sailing, crew and volleyball teams at Kings Point. Her father, a probation officer, had mixed feelings about her attending a military academy, she says, but her strong will prevailed.

Aboard the Maumee, the two women passed through the Panama Canal. Later,, not far from New Zealand, they learned that the cargo vessel USNS Bland that preceded them into McMurdo was delayed there due to a crack in her hull.

Since McMurdo's docking facility can accommodate only one vessel at a time, the Maumee refueled in New Zealand rather than on its return voyage to the United States.

Proceeding once again after the short layover, the Maumee headed into Antarctic water. Aboard ship, the women were always busy. Zarate, an engine cadet, stood engine room watch and helped in repairing the boilers and other machinery. "She is fantastic," wrote the chief engineer in his report to the Academy. "She helped in jobs too numerous to list—welding, electrical repairs and water treatment of the boilers."

Doyle, a deck cadet, spent most of her time on the bridge standing watch, and working on navigation problems. She too impressed her superiors. The chief mate reported, "She puts more time into her work than is expected of her."

Between watches, Zarate and Doyle were involved with their sea

projects, shipboard homework consisting of reports and written assignments forwarded to Kings Point for evaluation.

Near its destination, Maumee was joined by a U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker that would escort it through more hazardous waters. Involved as they were with shipboard duties, the women did not overlook the beauty of the Antarctic region. Doyle was particularly fascinated by the icebergs. "They were sculptured by the wind," she said. "The reflections from the sea and the sun gave off beautiful blue and green colors. The icebergs looked like mountains."

Almost one month after sailing from Aruba, Maumee steamed into McMurdo Sound with its precious cargo.

The first polar phenomenon to confront the women was the 24-hour sunshine of the Antarctic summer. While in port, they remained aboard the Maumee. "After the first sleepless night," confessed Doyle, "we tried hanging blankets over the porthole in our cabin. It worked, but it was difficult getting used to coming back to the ship from the Officers' Club in the late hours wearing sunglasses—in bright sunshine."

The second surprise was the relatively moderate climate of the Antarctic summer. "The temperature stayed between 20 and 30 degrees above zero," said Zarate. "We packed thermal underwear but never really needed it. Believe it or not, it was warmer there than back at the academy in New York."

Zarate and Doyle assisted with the unloading of the Maumee's cargo, but had plenty of opportunities to meet McMurdo's inhabitants. They were impressed with their cordial reception. "Everyone was so happy to see us," Zarate said. "Antarctica is not exactly geared to tourists, but we did get the chance to visit Scott's cabin, and we almost worked out an airplane flight over the South Pole."

The stopover in McMurdo was short, however, and after their cargo was delivered, the Maumee weighed anchor for home. The Kings Point voyagers returned to the academy in early March.

Their acceptance by the Maumee's all-male crew was perhaps the topic discussed most. Some of the men aboard ship took a fatherly attitude toward the female midshipmen. "After a long trip the men take an interest in you," Zarate said. "It's mostly the older men who say we're not strong enough or can't handle the physical labor. The younger men have more of an open mind. We told the men that we respected their point of view, but we really felt that if we couldn't do the work, we wouldn't be there."

Also impressed by the young women were the Maumee's chief mate and chief engineer. "Midshipman Ferne Doyle is a credit to Kings Point," wrote the mate. "When she gets her license I would be glad to accept her on board as one of my officers without hesitation."

The chief engineer had similar praise for Zarate. "It has been a pleasure having her aboard," he said. "She'll be a credit to the industry."

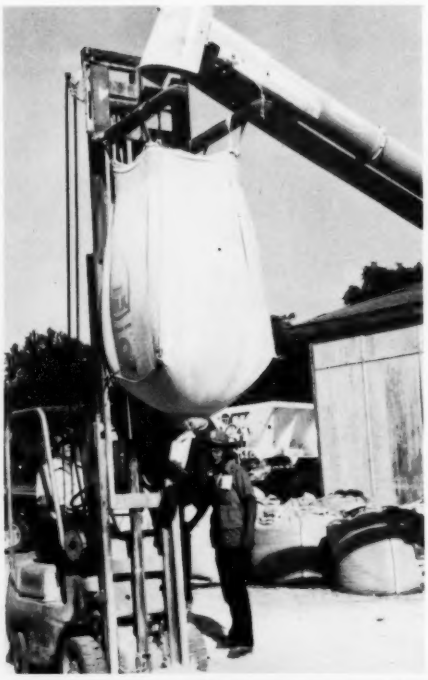
Volunteering for Operation Deep Freeze indicates that Doyle and Zarate take seriously the academy's motto, Acta Non Verba—Deeds, Not Words. When they graduate in 1979, they'll have the opportunity to again prove their mettle, female merchant marine officers working in an industry long dominated by men.

"I think I'd like to sail to Antarctica again," said Zarate, to which Doyle replied, "I wouldn't be surprised if she goes ahead and does it."

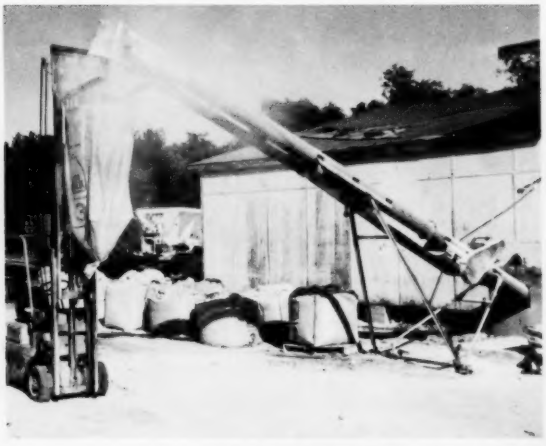
Martin P. Skrocki has been public information officer at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy since 1973. He has undergraduate and graduate degrees in English literature from Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y., and has worked as an editorial assistant with a New York literary agency, Scott Meredith, Inc.

Bagging Cargo By the Ton

A five-pound mini-bulk bag can hold a ton of cargo and can be unloaded in 20 to 30 seconds.



Four lifting loops on the bags fit the arms of a forklift.



Dry chemicals pour into a polypropylene bag equipped with a liner for fine powders.

Mini-bulk bags have been stacked seven high in ships holds.

If marketing tests are any indication, it may be easier to use a newly developed polypropylene storage and shipping bag than pronounce its name.

The Chase Bag Co., Greenwich, Conn. has come up with a five-pound woven bag that can hold a ton of bulk cargo.

The company reports that loaded bags have been stacked seven high in the holds of ships to test the durability of the reusable bag.

The bag is extremely strong and flexible, according to James Pouchot, manager for the company. Trade-marked mini-bulk, the bag costs $17 to $36, depending on size and quantity.

"The mini-bulk's one-ton capacity fills a size gap between hopper cars and 50 pound bags," Pouchot said. "We find that companies are using it for storage as well as for shipment."

The company distributes the bags in sizes of 26, 34, 42, and 49 cubic feet, each designed to hold one ton. They are made with a loop for single-hook crane, or with four lifting loops to fit the two arms of a forklift.

The loops are made of a material similar to automobile seat belts and are cross-stitched into each corner of the bag. In lift tests the straps held up to 5.7 tons, well above the load the bags will handle.

A polyethylene liner is available to secure fine powders like talc and a shroud is also available to protect cargo against ultraviolet light degradation.

Material can be emptied quickly —in 20 to 30 seconds—by releasing a tie-off cord at the base of the bag. A metal ring and loop form a quick release and closure device.

Friends and relatives at a San Francisco dock bid midshipmen a safe and happy voyage.

Learning Seamanship On the Golden Bear

By Bill Hayler and Win Yinger

On January 15th the California Maritime Academy's training ship Golden Bear poked her nose outside the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge on the way to her eighth training cruise. The ship and crew returned in March, 68 days and 12,300 miles later. In between, academy midshipmen visited Los Angeles, Honolulu, Lahaina, Noumea, Suva, Hilo and San Diego.

This cruise was one of three which midshipmen take during the four-year course to log the six months sea time on a training ship that is required for their licenses.

The sea training is the high point in the academic year at all state maritime academies, and the 1978 Golden Bear cruise was particularly successful. The ship was long enough at sea so that the seafaring routine became second nature to the midshipmen.

Two ports, Noumea and Suva, are little visited by U.S.-flag ships. In Noumea, French officials told us the Golden Bear was the first U.S. public vessel they had seen since 1958.

The purpose of a training cruise is to give both deck and engineering midshipmen as much experience as they can absorb. First class midshipmen are in charge of bridge and engine room watches under the watchful eye of the licensed faculty members, doing the jobs which they will perform when they receive their own licenses in a few months. Underclass midshipmen act in an unlicensed capacity in jobs of varying responsibility.

All first and second class deck midshipmen spend a third of their time at sea studying navigation.

During this time they duplicate the tasks they will perform as second mates. Just to make sure they don't get rusty, when they are not studying they must get at least one navigational fix daily.

This year the ship operated off San Clemente Island for several days before the Los Angeles visit and remained at Lahaina for a week after leaving Honolulu. These were rigorous shakedown periods with fire and boat drill, man overboard drill, and approaching and getting under way from an anchorage the daily fare from the beginning of the work day until the ship returned to her night anchorage in the early evening.

As a consequence, first class mid-

Those who have never crossed the equator are "pollywogs" and must undergo the time-honored dousing ritual.

Golden Bear was long enough at sea to give midshipmen a real taste of seafaring life.

shipmen probably had more opportunity to handle a ship on this cruise than they will again before they are a chief mate or master.

Among the 342 midshipmen aboard Golden Bear were 17 young women. The female midshipmen have their own berthing area, but otherwise are fully integrated into the ship's company. This was the fifth cruise the Golden Bear has carried women and their male classmates consider it "no big deal."

The newness of having women aboard a ship has long since worn off. The women chip paint, stand throttle watches, navigate, and clean bilges along with everybody else. Three women have already graduated and are sailing on their licenses. Two more will get their licenses, degrees, and naval reserve commissions in May.

Although the travel aspect of the cruise is secondary to training, it is important because it gives the midshipmen an opportunity to see ports which are new to them and which they may visit later in their careers. Most California Maritime Academy midshipmen are from California, and 80 per cent have never been to sea.

Those of us who have been at sea for many years are apt to forget how far away in distance, time, culture, and economics New Caledonia or Fiji—for example—are from Los Angeles, Salinas, or Sacramento. The Noumea and Suva visits are good illustrations.

Noumea is a charming and attractive French town in the South Pacific. Between 1942 and 1944 it was a large advance base and served as South Pacific Command headquarters. Although untouched by the Japanese, it came within the flick of an eyelash of being overrun.

Had the actions in the Solomons or the Coral Sea turned out differently New Caledonia would not have been so fortunate. Although the island may have been strained by the upwards of 100,000 U.S. personnel based there, happy memories of Americans remain.

Little English is spoken in New Caledonia and midshipmen and faculty had to dust off their high school French. Although there are ambitious plans to transform New Caledonia into a mecca for tourists, few tourists have visited. The new and modern Chateau Royal Casino Hotel is largely deserted. This is unfortunate because the climate is mild and the beaches unsurpassed.

French customs prevail to the delight of many of the midshipmen. Bikinis were brief.

Prices were high, but visitors are still so unusual that most midshipmen met families who gave them rides or welcomed them into their homes. A bulging wallet was not a necessity.

Suva is the capital of Fiji. It became independent of Great Britain in 1970 but still remains within the British Commonwealth. Closer to the Equator than Noumea, it is hot and humid, but cools off pleasantly at night.

Suva is a free port and prices are reasonable. Haircuts are $1 and draft beer only 20 cents. The town is so clean it sparkles. Not a candy wrapper or old newspaper was to be seen littering the streets.

The Fijians are a handsome people—large, muscular and friendly. During World War II, Admiral Halsey called them the best jungle fighters in the world.

It is easy to understand the disquiet which crossed Captain Bligh's mind 200 years ago when Fijians in war canoes pursued him as he passed through the Fijis on his way to Timor.

Although all cruises are good cruises, some stand out. The 1978 Golden Bear cruise was one of these. Although all hands were glad when the ship returned to her berth alongside the California Maritime Academy pier, they had seen a part of the world they would like to visit again, and had acquired the confidence that can come only from the experience of maintaining and operating a ship.

⚓

Boat drills were part of the rigorous training the midshipmen received.

Bill Hayler is a retired Navy captain and holds a masters degree in international relations. He has been on the California Maritime Academy faculty since 1970 and has written articles on seafaring for several maritime and naval magazines.

Win Yinger has been assistant commandant of midshipmen at the California Maritime Academy since 1974. He teaches speech and psychology and has authored articles for educational journals.

Small Boat Developed To Mop Up Oil Spills

Imagine a fleet of small twin-hulled boats airlifted to sea by helicopters, or rushed to a shoreline on flatbed trucks, or even dropped into the ocean far from shore by parachute from a cargo aircraft.

Then imagine the boats converging on an area where a disabled tanker is spilling oil into the sea and immediately beginning cleanup operations.

Each boat is guided through the water so that the oil slick runs between the five-foot wide channel between its pontoon hulls.

As oil-laden water passes beneath the boat, small chunks of a plastic foam material are spread upon the water from a hopper near the boat's bow. The spongy chunks are made by combining plastic materials and iron powder, which make them both oil-absorbent and ferromagnetic.

The oil-soaked chunks pass toward the stern where a rotating magnetic drum picks them up and draws them into a wringer that squeezes them dry. They then drop onto a conveyor belt that returns them to the hopper, where the cycle begins again.

Separated oil is stored in two 500-gallon tanks in the boats' pontoons. When seas are relatively calm, each boat can recover about 1,500 gallons per hour.

Since each boat has only a 1,000-gallon capacity, the collected oil is unloaded periodically into collapsible rubber containers which are towed astern.

A fleet of such boats could be built to combat oil spill if research supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Gulf-Tampa Drydocks proves the effort feasible.

The 24-foot boat is the brainchild of Joe Turbeville, a physicist at the University of South Florida at Tampa, who is optimistic that such a fleet could become a reality.

Turbeville spent five years designing and testing the boat and the ferromagnetic absorbent called ferrofoam, for which he and the university hold a patent.

Since last August, Turbeville has continued his research in Norway under the auspices of the Foundation for Science and Industrial Research. He said Norwegians are interested in his recovery method, especially for use in combating oil spills around broken ice floes along the Norway coast.

Two trials were made on a proto-

type boat in April and May 1977 in Tampa Harbor in a no-oil, calm-water environment. The trials tested the boat's stability, maneuverability and operational functioning.

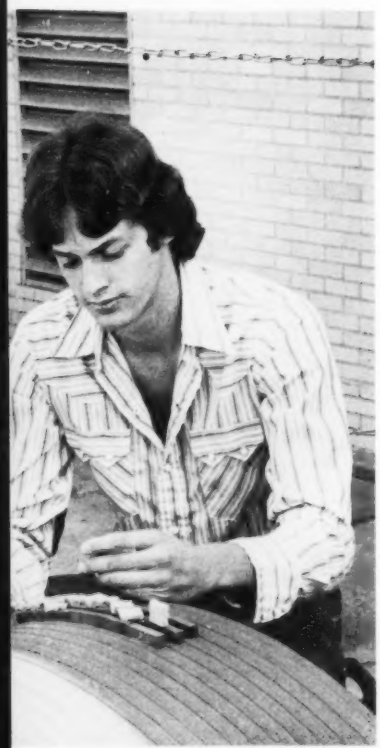
Turbeville was pleased by the results of those trials. "The boat functioned like we wanted it to. It picked up everything we hoped it would. The biggest thing we proved was that the ferrofoam would be picked up by the magnetic drum."

He explained that no oil could be used in the trials because of environmental considerations. But extensive tests under laboratory conditions have been made with the drum and the ferrofoam.

Turbeville is convinced that the smallboats would be effective for oil spill cleanup. "Small boats offer more flexibility and can be transported anywhere in the world where there is a spill," he said.

He is equally confident that the ferrofoam will do the job. "Over 40 sample batches of foam were made and tested before we agreed upon a formulation."

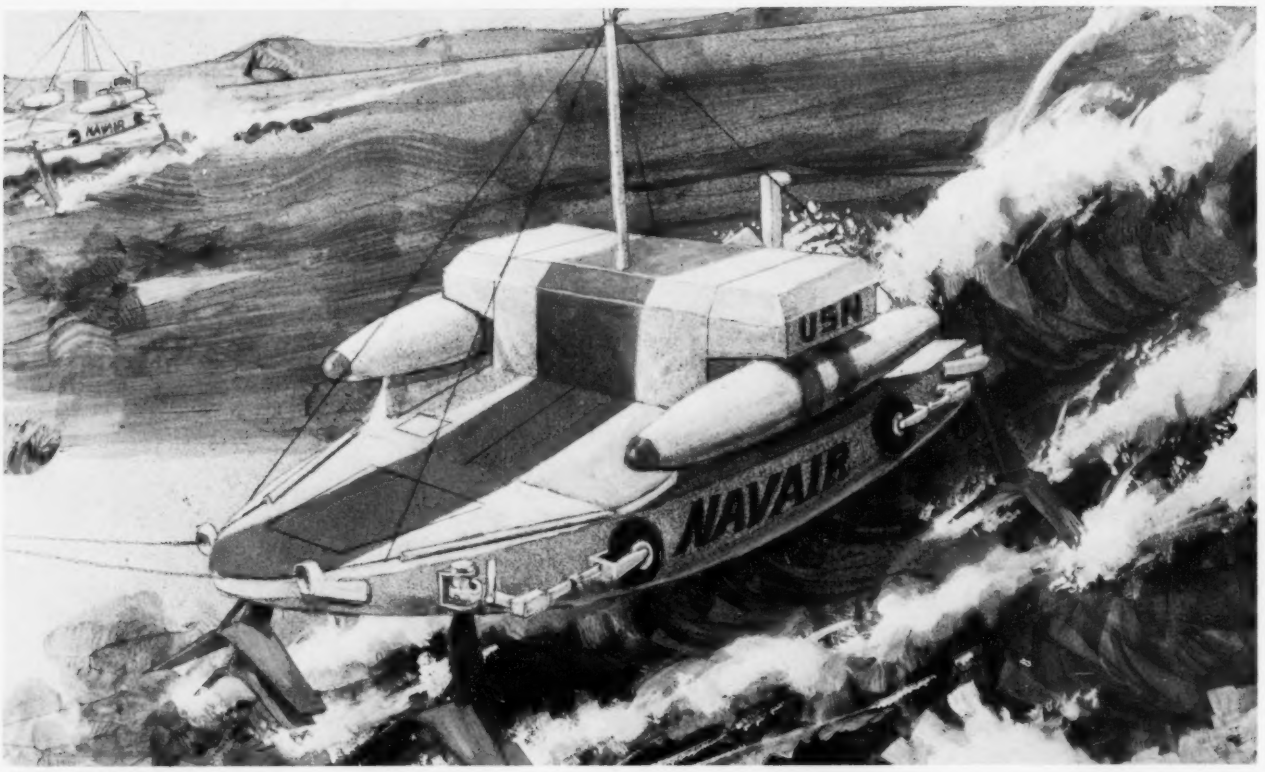
"The principal advantage of a reusable sorbent material is that many gallons of oil can be recovered with a small amount of sorbent. The problems of stowage, transportation, distribution, recovery and final disposal are greatly diminished." ⚓



Joe Turbeville (left) and students Jeff Back (center) and Terrell Wilson place magnets on the drum of the oil recovery boat to test magnetic separation theory.

The oil recovery boat gets its first test on Tampa Bay. The initial trial was considered a success.

Courtesy St. Petersburg Times



Courtesy EDO Corp.

The Navy is acquiring an improved minesweeping craft that its manufacturer claims is "the next generation airborne magnetic mine countermeasure system." The Navy awarded a $17.6 million contract to EDO Corp. which said the new system will provide a dramatic increase in minesweeping capability over the Navy's MK105, also built by EDO. The MK105 was used to clear Haiphong Harbor during the Southeast Asia war and the Suez Canal after the Mid-East conflict of 1975. Like the MK105, the new model will be towed by helicopter but will be lighter with improved hydrodynamics.

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